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SUBJECT: ALBANIA: 2008 COUNTRY REPORTS ON TERRORISM

REF: STATE 120019

[1](#)1. (SBU) In 2008 Albania pledged to increase its contribution of troops to Afghanistan, maintained frozen bank accounts related to money laundering and terrorism financing, and aggressively worked with the United States and other countries to combat terrorism. Albania made progress in identifying vulnerabilities at land and sea borders, but the government and police forces continued to face substantial challenges to enforce fully border security and combat organized crime and corruption.

[1](#)2. (SBU) On January 14th, 2008, the criminal trial began against Hamzeh Abu Rayyan, the administrator for UNSCR 1267 Committee-designated terrorist financier Yassin Al-Kadi. Al-Kadi is charged with hiding funds used to finance terror. The trial was still ongoing as of December 2008. This marked the first ever criminal terror finance-related case in Albania. A civil suit filed by al-Kadi to release his assets from seizure was originally dismissed for technical reasons but was refiled in July. The lawsuit was again dismissed by the court in September. Al-Kadi's company "Loxhall" also filed a lawsuit in April, aimed at annulling the Council of Ministers' decision and the two orders of the Ministry of Finance related to administration of seized terrorism assets.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Although no new groups' assets were frozen this year under Albania's Terrorism Financing Freeze (TFF) law enacted in 2004, as of October, the Ministry of Finance claimed that it maintained asset freezes against six individuals and fourteen foundations and companies on the UNSCR 1267 list. Despite this progress, the effectiveness of the government's counterterrorist financing effort was undermined by a lack of data-processing infrastructure and an inadequate capability to track and manage cases properly.

[1](#)4. (U) Embassy Tirana POC is Michael Gray, graymw3@state.gov